Top Foods High in Taurine

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Taurine is an amino acid that serves many functions in the body. Your body makes some of the taurine it needs for these processes, but there may be health benefits to getting more in your diet.

Most animal products and byproducts contain taurine, like beef and dark meat poultry, shellfish, and dairy. It's also available as a supplement, which studies show may help people manage certain conditions or diseases.

Energy drinks often include taurine as well, but are not a great source. These drinks are usually high in sugar and caffeine, and they contain other ingredients that can be harmful in high amounts.

What Does Taurine Do?

Taurine is an inhibitory neurotransmitter. That means it blocks or stops chemical messages to other parts of your body. Gamma-aminobutyric acid (GABA), glycine, and serotonin are examples of other inhibitory neurotransmitters. Taurine is also a neuromodulator, or a special kind of neurotransmitter that plays a role in your emotions, behaviors, and brain function.

Is Taurine Bull Semen?

No. It was first taken from bull semen in the 1800s, but today's version is made in a lab.

Why You Need Taurine

Your body makes much of the taurine it needs, but you need more from your diet to support the amino acid (organic compounds that make proteins) functions.

These processes include:

- Maintaining your body's electrolyte balance and proper hydration
- Regulating the central nervous system
- Supporting eye and vision health

Research shows that getting extra in our diet may have other health benefits, however, and may be required for people with some health conditions.

On average, most people get about 400 milligrams of taurine per day in their diet. Studies that point to potential health benefits require much higher doses and show that getting up to 3,000 milligrams per day is safe.

Adding more taurine to your diet can have health benefits like:

Lower Risk of Diabetes

Taurine plays a role in regulating your blood sugar levels. Its effect can help lower high blood sugar and reduce insulin resistance, both of which are risk factors of diabetes.
While more research is needed, maintaining high taurine levels may reduce your risk of developing diabetes and help manage the disease's symptoms.

Supporting Heart Health

While research is ongoing, it shows that taurine helps maintain a healthy cardiovascular system.

Studies indicate that taurine can manage cholesterol and triglyceride levels, which are fats in our blood that can block arteries and contribute to heart disease. It may also reduce blood pressure and artery stiffness, which are risk factors for heart problems.

Increasing Muscle Endurance

As an antioxidant, taurine helps protect your muscles from cell damage.

More research is needed, but studies suggest that taurine's effects can reduce muscle fatigue, soreness, and damage during and after exercise.

It may even boost the amount of fat burned during exercise.

Foods With Taurine

The main taurine sources are meat, dairy, and fish — and studies show cooking food doesn't affect a food's taurine content.

Because there are few plant-based foods containing taurine, people who are vegetarian or vegan may need a taurine supplement. Talk to your doctor about whether more taurine in your diet would benefit your health and how you should take it.

The best natural sources of taurine include:

1. **Scallops.** Shellfish have some of the highest taurine content, especially scallops. Whether you cook them or eat them raw, 100 grams of scallops can have up to 827 milligrams of taurine. Other good options include clams at 520 milligrams and mussels at up to 655 milligrams for the same portion.
2. **Tuna.** Whether you get it fresh or from a can, tuna is an excellent source of taurine. Though when choosing your fish, darker meat is richer in amino acids than white meat. Some varieties, like yellowfin tuna, contain up to 964 milligrams per 100 grams, while other marine fish have high levels as well. Try cod for its 120 milligrams or salmon with 94 milligrams of taurine per serving.
3. **Tilapia.** Freshwater fish are high in taurine as well. Tilapia's dark muscle has about 972 milligrams for a 150-gram filet, while the white meat has less than 120 milligrams. There's

4. **Octopus.** Octopus contains about 335 milligrams per 3-ounce portion. Squid has potent levels as well, with 219 milligrams for the same serving.

5. **Turkey.** With up to 306 milligrams per 100 grams, turkey has the highest taurine content of any animal meat. But like fish, the meat you choose matters. Only dark turkey meat has these high amounts, while light meat has just 30 milligrams.

6. **Chicken.** You can add chicken to almost any recipe — and with it, about 170 milligrams of taurine to your meal. However, as with turkey, go for the dark meat for the taurine benefits. Light meat like chicken breast has only 18 milligrams of taurine per 100 grams compared to cuts like chicken thighs.

7. **Seaweed.** Because most taurine sources are from animals, seaweed is an excellent option for people on a plant-based diet. Nori, the papery-like seaweed product used in making sushi, has up to 1,300 milligrams of taurine per 100 grams. While we don't eat that much in a single sitting, sprinkling a sheet of nori into a dish or eating it with sushi can add about 40 milligrams of taurine to your meal.

8. **Beef.** Beef is rich in nutrients and amino acids, including taurine. While a high intake of red meats is linked to greater rates of chronic diseases, most people can have two to three servings a week without much risk. With these servings, you'll add about 40 milligrams of taurine to your meal.

Taurine Supplements

You can also get taurine through supplements, but most people don't need them. You usually get enough from food.

If you're not sure you do, ask your doctor about taurine powders, tablets, or fluids. You can also get taurine through a multivitamin. You might need to do this if you receive parenteral nutrition, or when you're fed through an IV.

Babies who aren't breastfed might also need a taurine supplement. Some infant formulas have taurine in them. But be sure to always ask your pediatrician about any new medications or supplements.

Taurine in Energy Drinks

While many energy drinks have taurine, they also tend to have a lot of sugar and caffeine.

Healthy adults can usually have an energy drink with no problems. But for some people, especially those with underlying issues, the caffeine in these drinks can trigger sleep issues, dehydration, anxiety, or nervousness. Teenagers and children shouldn't have energy drinks either.

If you want to get more taurine in your diet, it's best to eat foods high in taurine. You can also take supplements if your doctor says it's OK.

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